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J. W. Henderson to Sarah A. M. Henderson (7 September 1862)

John Watson Henderson

Sarah Anne Means Henderson

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Recommended Citation

Henderson, John Watson and Henderson, Sarah Anne Means, "J. W. Henderson to Sarah A. M. Henderson (7 September 1862)" (1862). *Correspondence*. 496.

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I don't think I could have carried my knapsack across these mountains. We have traveled over two very large mountains, Walden's Ridge & the Cumberland mountain. They were very rough & steep in places & very rocky. My feet have not blistered as badly as they did before. I have one tolerably large blister on one of my heels. It was made yesterday but I hope it will be better tomorrow as we expect to leave here in the morning or next day.

Sparta, Middle Tennessee,
Sunday, Sept. 7th 1862, Dearest Fannie, It has been about ten days since I wrote you last & miles this side of Chattanooga. We are now near Sparta about 75 or 80 miles from Chattanooga. We have done some very hard marching since we left, but yesterday was the hardest march we have had. We traveled about 20 miles, the other days about 12 or 15 miles. We have marched about 5 days since we started & rested the others. We are all standing the march tolerably well, rather better than we did from Corinth. Our company has one advantage more than we had from Corinth, when we got to Tupelo, our Secy, Lieutenant John Bacon went home & bought two mules & a wagon to haul our knapsacks. Al. Davidson drives it & hauls all the knapsacks of the company. It is a very great help. We have our guns, cartridge boxes, haversacks & canteens to carry. I don't think I could have carried my knapsack across these mountains. We have traveled over two very large mountains, Walden's Ridge & the Cumberland mountain. They were very rough & steep in places & very rocky. My feet have not blistered as badly as they did before. I have one tolerably large blister on one of my heels. It was made yesterday but I hope it will be better tomorrow as we expect to leave here in the morning or next day.

Dearest it looks like I am getting away from you pretty
fast, & I expect by the time you read this letter, if you get it
at all, I will perhaps be in Kentucky, we hardly think
we are going to Nashville, we have heard that the Yankees
are about to evacuate that place & our object is to get
in a head of them. We are seeing a pretty hard time of
it now, but I don't think we ought to complain since
we are succeeding so well in driving the enemy from
our country, we have got them out of Alabama & I think
will soon have them out of Tenn. They are retreating
rapidly before us, they were here at Sparta a short
time ago, & at McMinnville, some 20 or 25 miles south of
that place but they are all gone now, making
their way towards Nashville, Some of our troops have
had some skirmishes with them on the way but always
whipped them. Some think we will have a big battle
at Nashville but I don't, I think they will leave there
before we get there & we will be apt to meet them
somewhere in Kentucky. Our general Curtis Smith had
a fight of three days with them at Richmond Ky.
a week or two ago & whipped them badly, killed one or
two of their generals, captured 3000 prisoners & all their
artillery, small arms, wagons &c. & it is thought he will
surround & destroy the whole army there, hope he will,

Old Stonewall Jackson, Longstreet & Lee are
driving them back in Virginia. They had a fight
there not long ago on the old Manassas battle ground
& drove them back to Munson's Hill near Arlington's
heights not very far from Washington City. So you
see if we can only succeed in capturing old Buell's
forces about Nashville or above there, we will certainly
have them pretty badly whipped & perhaps they
will give it up & we may have peace before a great
while. I shall be glad how soon. I am very anxious
to get back home to live with my dearest Sallie &
sweetest Louie & Alice. I think I would be so glad
to get back there I would ^{hardly} know how to behave myself
& I suppose you would be equally as glad to see me.
Dear I am glad to tell you that my diarrhea has been better
for the last few days. I have a bad cold & it is so
very dry & dusty marching that I have the headache
nearly all the time. I will be glad when we get to
a place where we can stop a few weeks & get a good
rest & our clothes all cleaned up. We are all very dusty
& dirty. I took a good wash today in a little river
or large creek near our camp ground but I did not
think it worth while to put on clean clothes as I
would dirty them in a few hours after we start again.

Dear I wrote in one of my letters not long ago
I wanted you to send my mother a shirt with the number
if he should come up after they get over sail making
all fixed up & we get the same soup & no place
you can make in the house about the same
linsey shirt if you need a second you can make the
under shirt you will do for me well the best better
try & get them all of a color so they will not
show out & send my old linsey coat back that will
do for an over coat I am waiting for a jacket
I am sending my other winter garments as these are some-
what worn although there are no holes in them yet.

After I am home I have now back home till next spring
I do hope I will be there before that time. I have
me a pair of boots made at Waterbury number 10 &
send them along as I expect to have a good deal of
snow to split before we get to Cincinnati or New
York & tell your father to come along or send me a bottle
of peach brandy & one of honey to drink when we
get the Yankees all driven from our confederacy.
I have had only two or three drinks since I left
home & I had to pay 25 cts each for them. There is a
good deal of brandy in this country but no private
get very little of it. The officers mostly have it.